



Elton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111225
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278627
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Frank Carruthers CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Elton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chester, Cheshire CH2 4LT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 725452
Number on roll	227	Fax number	01928 724312
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs V Salisbury
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs S Moorcroft

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This village school draws children from Elton and a few children come from further afield. Almost all are white British and there are a few from Traveller families. The social-economic backgrounds of most children range from average to above average. The school is resourced to take up to 12 children with moderate learning difficulties from within or outside the school's locality. The school has gained an inclusion award and the Cheshire's Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the school is good with some outstanding features. This judgement reflects that of the school. The cost of educating a child at the school is below average and the school gives good value for money. The key strengths of the school are: the outstanding personal development and well-being of the children; the quality of the curriculum and some excellent elements of the care, guidance and support for children, which are good overall. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because of the high quality of provision. Children achieve well during their time in school and standards are close to the national average in the current Year 6. Standards are sometimes adversely affected where the outward movement of children is high. There are significant numbers of children with additional learning needs who although they achieve well, the standards they attain tends to depress the overall results for the school in the national tests. Standards of writing were below average in 2005 and are a key focus for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to the good achievement of children. However, marking is variable and children do not always have a clear idea how to improve. The learning environment in school is exceptional, being especially conducive to promoting the confidence, self-esteem and independence of children. Leadership, management and governance are good and the commitment to giving the best opportunities to the children is excellent. The monitoring of standards and use of performance data is satisfactory overall but is not sharp to identify precisely where the school needs to raise standards further. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's writing especially in Key Stage 2.
- Give clear pointers for improvement when marking the children's work.
- Monitor more rigorously the school's performance and the children's achievement and standards, so that the information gathered has more impact on improving standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of children is good. Children start school with attainment generally below expected levels, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and most, though not all reach the expected goals for learning by the end of the Reception year. Progress continues to be good in Key Stage 1 and standards have been rising in recent years so that they are above average by Year 2. In Key Stage 2 classes, standards vary and are adversely affected where the proportion of children with additional learning needs is high and by children moving out of the school. For instance, standards in 2005, in which 30% of children had additional learning needs, were significantly below average. Girls performed poorly although many had specific learning needs. There is no evidence of underperformance by girls in previous years

or in the current Years 5 and 6. In addition, outward mobility was high, with eight children in the year group having left the school during the junior years. Standards in the current Year 6 are better than those in the last two years, being broadly average, with more children on target to achieve level 5 in English and mathematics than last year. Standards in the current Year 5 are above average and children in both Years 5 and 6 are achieving well. Standards in mathematics are now good because of a clear focus given to improving problem solving skills. Standards of writing, however, are not high enough and are a key aspect for improvement. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well on the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of children, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is reflected in children's excellent behaviour in lessons and around school and in the above average levels of attendance. There have been no exclusions. Parents and children report that any concerns about the behaviour of individual children are dealt with appropriately. Older children play an essential part in the process of managing the behaviour of those that are younger. There are many opportunities to take on this responsibility, which helps to promote the maturation process. Children effectively learn about being safe as they take on roles of play leaders, peer counsellors and school councillors. Because of the support of older children, playtimes are 'fun'. Parents of younger children report how their children appreciate playing with the older play leaders, which helps them to settle. Children are developing a good awareness of healthy eating; many are given responsibility to be involved in developing provision in school and contributing to the local community. They support wider issues, such as child poverty. Children learn much about becoming independent learners as well as the world of work through close and productive links with outside providers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the Foundation Stage, good teaching and very effective use of the teaching assistant enable children to achieve well. Good teaching in Key Stage 1 helps children build on these firm foundations. The teaching in Key Stage 2 classes is good overall but there is a need to focus on promoting higher standards in writing, especially for the more able children. The high quality of relationships evident between staff and children has a very significant impact on children's learning and their obvious enjoyment of it. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to provide a high level of effective support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Specialist teaching in music, and design and technology is particularly good and contributes well to the high standards in these subjects. There

have been recent improvements in the use of assessment information and target setting. Although marking is thorough, pointers for improvement are sometimes omitted and as a result children do not have a consistently clear idea how to improve their work. There are sufficient opportunities in all classes for children to develop speaking and listening skills, especially through role play activities and the use of 'talking partners'. Information and communication technology is generally integrated well into lessons, though occasionally, the use of computers slows the pace of learning and consequently objectives are not achieved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and promotes all aspects of children's personal development exceptionally well. Children are provided with effective skills in literacy and numeracy, although the school acknowledges that further work is needed to raise standards in writing. Provision for children with additional learning needs is good, as is the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. for the children. The high quality learning environment throughout the school stimulates learning and recognises achievement. For example, topic weeks are a key feature, such as 'Arts Week', when children in the Reception year produced high quality work inspired by aboriginal art. Effective partnerships, including those with businesses and local high schools, provide a wealth of enrichment. This was evident in some outstanding robotics lessons for Year 5 children. One child commented, 'You'd never believe Year 5 children could build real robots!' Educational visits, visitors and foreign language teaching broaden the children's understanding of the world. High quality residential visits and out of school clubs foster self-confidence and teamwork.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of children are good with some outstanding features and have a positive impact on children's personal development and well-being. Robust procedures for child protection including risk assessment ensure that children are properly safeguarded. Efforts to involve children in assessing their own learning are beginning to have a positive impact on standards achieved. Targets are set in literacy and numeracy to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Through praise, recognition and the provision of opportunities to take on responsibility, children's self-confidence and self-esteem are successfully developed. Good quality support enables vulnerable children and those with additional needs to make good progress. Meetings with external agencies, for example, speech and language specialists, help to plan the support required and enable a review of the progress being made.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good with strengths in providing high quality learning opportunities to all children, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds and those with additional learning needs. There is strong teamwork from the top down. The headteacher leads by example and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Overall, procedures to evaluate how well the school is performing are satisfactory. Good features include the identification of improvements needed to the curriculum and the learning environment, including the school grounds. Parents and children are closely consulted in planning how the school is to develop. There is insufficient emphasis, however, on standards and achievement in the school development plan. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory but is not sharp enough in identifying points for improvement. Information about how well the school is performing is analysed satisfactorily. However, although overall strengths and weaknesses are identified, there is insufficient analysis of the detail to give a clear focus to precisely how improve standards further. The monitoring of subjects by subject leaders is good and includes monitoring teachers' planning and children's work. Governance is good: there is a very good level of expertise among governors, who support and fulfil their roles in school well. Their awareness of the school's performance is generally good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to, especially the play leaders and pupil counsellors, while we were at school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

There are many things that are really good in your school and that you can feel very proud of.

- We were very impressed with how you grow up into mature, well mannered children and how older children take on such important responsibilities around school.
- The staff in your school take really good care of you all and teach you well.
- You work hard, you are making good progress, and it is clear that you really enjoy school.
- We loved the grounds around your school and the big, spacious classrooms that are so well looked after and decorated so beautifully with your work.
- The staff provide you with excellent opportunities in subjects such as design and technology, geography, art and music, in activities after school and residential and day trips. So do make the most of them!

To help your school to continue to improve, we want the staff to:

- help you to achieve better standards in writing
- give you clear pointers for improvement when they mark your work.

Also we want the staff and governors to check carefully on how well the school is doing.